



REACH THE GROVE!

let's reach the grove together

*What's in store for the future of our church
and how will we reach the grove?*

*Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all
that we ask or think according to the power that works in us —
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all
generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Ephesians 3:20-21

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INTRODUCTION

Hey Grove Family!

Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us this:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

This verse gives us great insight to what a church should strive for. In simple terms, the church honors Christ, above all, and strives for unity and togetherness. This is the hallmark of the family of faith. The New Testament church is known as a gathering church. But what do we gather for?

- We gather to receive something from God.
- We gather to give something to God.
- We gather to encourage each other by our shared faith and values.
- We gather to bless one another.
- We gather to work together.

I have been part of The Grove since 2015. Since 2018 I have been blessed with the honor and privilege of serving as your Lead Pastor. Our church is, by far, the best church my family and I have ever been a part of.

Grove family, I want us to embody all that God has commanded and called us to be. This handbook is meant to provide detailed information regarding the mission and vision of The Grove and the work I believe God is calling us to.

I want *this* vision to be *our* vision. I want every person who walks through the doors of our church to know who we are and what we are about. Time and time again we see God's people banding together to accomplish the vision the Lord had given a leader. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and many more all had a vision given to them by the Lord and all of them had others who joined them in seeing that vision come to fruition.

Church, that is what I want to do. That is what I want to accomplish. I believe this handbook lays out, in detail, the vision God has given me for our church and our community for the coming year and in the years ahead. It won't be easy, there may be

bumps in the road but it's something we have the honor and privilege of doing together.

While some of the items in this vision may take years to accomplish I believe if we work together, pray together, worship together, fail together and grow together - with our eyes focused on Jesus we can lay the framework for a lasting legacy of Christian worship and kingdom growth in Orange Grove, Texas and in the surrounding areas.

By locking arms in this vision we can experience a deep and abiding relationship with one another and more importantly with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Will you join me? I love you church!

Pastor Roland Contreras

Lead Pastor - The Grove

ANATOMY OF OUR CHURCH

Beliefs and Affiliation:

- The Grove views the Bible as God's holy word and believes it is sufficient for all matters regarding faith and practice. The Grove also adheres to the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. Find more information about what The Grove believes at www.reachthegrove.com/beliefs
- The Grove is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (Nationally) and the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (Statewide). Our affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention is driven by a desire to cooperate and network with like-minded churches to reach the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Each Southern Baptist church is autonomous and unique. To learn more about our Baptist faith and heritage, visit www.sbc.net/about

Mission Statement:

The Grove exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

- Our mission is rooted in the Great Commission. The Great Commission comes from the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20.

Our Church Values:

- *Gathering - We gather together to worship God (Hebrews 10:23-25)*
 - All throughout the Bible believers are called to gather together. From young to old, we were never meant to walk alone. Life is best lived in community and fellowship with one another. That's God's grand design for his people. God's people are a gathering people and in our gathering together we make it a priority to worship God with our lives and through our lives.
- *Growing - We grow together in God's word (Colossians 2:6-7)*
 - At The Grove, God's word is paramount to all we do. God has chosen to reveal himself and his will through his written word. One cannot know God if one does not know God's word. That's why we make it a point to be a church that places a high priority on God's word and works toward biblical literacy.
- *Going - We go out to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)*
 - We desire to make disciples in the community of Orange Grove and the surrounding areas. When lives are changed and disciples are made,

maximum impact for the kingdom takes place in homes, communities, work and neighborhoods.

- *Giving - We give of our time, talents and treasures (2 Corinthians 8:5)*
 - Our giving is a spiritual act of worship, an expression of gratitude for all God has provided, and is vital to our spiritual growth.

WHY VISION IS IMPORTANT:

Vision is a vital and necessary part of any church! People need something to grab onto, something to aim for and something they can be a part of. A common goal and a common vision is what binds people.

As members of God's family, Christ is the one who binds us together. Being a part of that family means we have a common goal and mission: **to make disciples**. But how do we do that? How does the mission get accomplished? That's where vision comes in! Vision is a strategic plan for accomplishing the mission. That's the purpose of this handbook. **It is designed to give every member of The Grove an overview of what we believe God is calling us to do.**

The prophet Habakkuk wrote these words in chapter 2 of his book, verses 2-3:

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie, though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

The book of Proverbs, also known as a book with incredible wisdom shares these words from chapter 29 verse 18:

Where there is no vision, the people perish

God has revealed himself to us in his son Jesus Christ and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit granted us the strength and ability to live our lives as representatives of his kingdom.

FROM THE TOP, DOWN:

Any vision will fail unless it is believed and lived out from the top, down. That's why myself, along with our staff and servant leaders, are dedicated to modeling the very things we hope to accomplish in this handbook. Myself, our staff and our servant leaders can never expect from our church what we are not willing to do ourselves. ***Our leadership will be committed to investing and growing in our own spiritual development so as to effectively serve and lead our church body in this vision.***

OUR VISION MOVING FORWARD:

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP:

Psalm 102:18 - *Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord*

What is family discipleship?

Family discipleship is the process of training and teaching your entire family to follow Jesus. The family unit has the honor and privilege of forming and shaping the next generation. Cultivating a culture of family discipleship at The Grove will allow us to encourage and equip families to raise children to love God's word and model the christian lifestyle.

Why family discipleship?

If we don't steward our responsibility to point our families towards faith and obedience in Jesus we risk the lies of this world influencing them instead. Families must rely on the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit to fill them with strength and equip them with all that is necessary to live out our Christian walk. When families change, communities change. When communities change, nations change. When nations change, the world is transformed. Every significant and major change, especially revival, first begins in the home. When parents see and understand their role as the primary influencers and disciplers of the home then we can begin to take the first steps toward impacting the next generation.

How will we accomplish this?

As a way to partner with parents we will be providing various resources throughout the year and in the future. These resources are meant to equip parents and families in the discipleship process. Resources will include the following:

- Book recommendations
- Bible reading plans
- Sermon discussion guides
- Small Group / Conferences on Parenting and Marriage
- Sermon Series designed to give a biblical understanding of family discipleship
- Videos that teach families how to have biblical discussion
- Student & Kid Ministry emphasis on discipleship
- Community events for the whole family
- Family activity guides and workbooks
- Providing training to keep parents aware of cultural influences
- Establishing a discipleship team that focuses on ways to grow in obedience and holiness to the Lord.

BIBLICAL LITERACY:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

What is biblical literacy?

Biblical literacy is knowing the basics of the bible. It's reading and studying it with the ability to comprehend, interpret and apply the text.

- *Comprehend* - What does it say?
- *Interpret* - What does it mean?
- *Apply* - How should it change me?

Why biblical literacy?

Statistics regarding Christians and their bible habits and knowledge are astounding. According to Pew Research, almost half of all Christians never or seldom read their bible. Only 35% read their bible daily and there appears to be rising numbers of Christians who are unable to answer simple questions about Noah's Ark or the Ten Commandments. Biblical literacy is a call to all Christians to know God's word.

When Christians are engaged in their bible, are able to read it, study it - all while comprehending, interpreting and applying it, a doorway of spiritual growth is open like never before. Knowing the Bible allows Christian to give a defense of the Christian

faith, stand on biblical principles and gives them the ability to discern what is true and what is not. It also stirs a passion and delight for the Lord.

When Christians know their bible, family discipleship will follow, mission involvement will follow, christlikeness will follow and we will begin to see a love for God's word molded in the hearts of his people. The more we know God's word, the more we will know God!

How will we accomplish this?

In an effort to teach people about the importance and effectiveness of biblical literacy we will be providing various resources throughout the year and in the future. These resources are meant to equip and empower people to grow in their love and knowledge of God's word. Resources will include the following:

- Book recommendations
- Sermon series that focus on what the Bible is and why it is vital for us today
- Videos that explain and teach basic bible knowledge
- Small group / Sunday School curriculum that focuses on what the Bible is
- Teachings that walk Christians through the process of comprehension, interpretation and application.
- Sermon series and videos focusing on apologetics
- Print material with basic bible information

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM:

Romans 10:13-14 - *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*
How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

What is missions?

Mission work is accomplished through the local church and a means by which the Gospel is spread across cultures and around the world. Missions are a catalyst for evangelism. Mission work crosses cultures and bridges the gap between their way of life and the gospel.

What is evangelism?

Evangelism is the living out and spreading of the gospel with the sole purpose of inviting others to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Evangelism builds community, strengthens relationships, serves others and puts on full display the love of Jesus Christ.

Why evangelism?

People need to hear the Gospel. It is imperative that we do all we can to tell others the good news of Jesus Christ. The Bible commands believers everywhere to love their neighbors, serve others, extend kindness, be ambassadors of peace and so much more. This is a vital need in our world today. When we invite others to know Jesus, we are living like Christ and shining his light into dark places.

Why missions?

There are countless individuals and people groups around the world who do not know Jesus. Mission work is necessary in order to engage people from a different culture. This is accomplished by learning the culture, preaching the gospel and raising up Christian leaders within said culture to do the same.

How will we accomplish this?

By discipling families and giving people an avenue to know their bible they will be equipped to be evangelistic and mission-educated wherever they are.

- Book recommendations
- Sermon series with heavy mission & evangelism emphasis
- Training and equipping our members how to live on mission daily
- Local service projects
- Mission trips to engage in gospel work with ministry partners
- Establishing a missions team that will focus on future ministry partnerships projects and endeavors as it relates to sharing the love of Christ and proclaiming the Gospel.
- Supporting local, national and international missionaries.

OTHER AREAS OF FOCUS:

Building Campaign & Future Projects:

As the Lord blesses our church with growth we have quickly outgrown our current facilities. Every week we have countless children, students and families come through

our doors to hear the gospel message and experience love and kindness from our church leaders and volunteers. In order to continue to provide a place to accommodate our growing numbers and the needs of our community we must seek to expand our current facilities.

While the gospel and ministry is not exclusive to a particular type or size of a building, having the appropriate facilities as well as space allows us to continue to minister to people and advance the kingdom of God with excellence and persistence in Orange Grove and the surrounding areas.

New Building Project:

My desire is to see our next building project completed in 2-3 phases.

- Phase 1 - A building with several classrooms to serve as additional education space, small group gatherings, Wednesday evening activities and other church and community needs.
- Phase 2 - A full size gym. The gym should include a full size kitchen, storage and provide a place for effective ministry, community outreach and will double as a fellowship hall or a makeshift worship center should the need arise.
- Phase 3 - A dedicated youth and children's space. Environments matter and providing a space dedicated to these ministries demonstrates the value and importance we place on them. These spaces will be a haven for ministry and gospel proclamation for families in our community.

Welcome Area:

Having a dedicated welcome space will serve as a great first impression area for members, visitors, guests and our community at large. It will allow our entryway to be a place for fellowship and conversation. It will serve as a homebase to focus on visitors and guests as we set the tone for genuine connections.

Resource Area:

Providing a dedicated resource area will give our church and those seeking to know more information about our mission, values and purpose a place to find details. This area will have resources to cultivate and grow into our vision.

Having the entire church body involved and updated with each of these endeavors is vital to its success and completion.

Community Outreach & Integration:

The Grove must seek to love and serve our community in every way possible. In simple terms, the community is welcomed here. In detailed terms, The Grove will serve as a place for the community to gather, have events and provide services that meet the needs of those in and around our area. This will create deeper connections and allow our church to continue to be a hallmark of love and service.

Church Partnerships:

The Grove has experienced significant growth and blessings. This is a clear indicator of God's hand upon our church and is evidence of faithful service from our members, leaders and volunteers. Within a 20 mile radius of The Grove there are over 30 Protestant churches. Many are serving their communities and loving their neighbors. Others are struggling financially and with how they serve and impact their community. While each church is local and unique in its context, we are all part of THE Church, the universal church. At some point in the future, The Grove should seek to partner with struggling churches to assist them and share with them ways, methods and ideas on how to impact their community and provide a place for life change and transformation.

Ministry Partnerships:

Ministry partnerships are an integral part of who we are and what we believe. At The Grove we believe one of the best ways to fulfill our mission and vision is by partnering with ministries and organizations for the sole purpose of making disciples and loving people with the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. We are invested and connected with these ministries for the long haul knowing that the greatest Kingdom impact is made when we are in it together.

Current Partners

- **Camp Zephyr**
 - Camp Zephyr is leading the way when it comes to camp ministry. Their desire is to create an environment that encourages spiritual development and guides people towards a deeper trust and greater faith in Christ. Every year thousands of campers are introduced to the Gospel as lives are continuing to be transformed.
- **Southern Baptist Convention of Texas**
 - The Southern Baptist Convention of Texas is dedicated to reaching Texas and touching the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through our partnership with the SBTC The Grove has their fingerprints on Gospel initiatives that include church planting, disaster relief, leadership training, providing clean water for impoverished nations and so much more.

- **Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend**
 - The Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend is a pro-life organization that makes it their mission to offer compassion, hope and help to those facing an unplanned pregnancy.
- **Queens Church NYC**
 - Queens Church is a church plant located in the Queens borough of New York City. The mission of Queens Church is for people to know God, experience the love of the local church and be transformed by the power of the Gospel.
- **Baptist Student Ministry**
 - The BSM exists to bring the hope of Jesus to the students of Texas A&M University in Kingsville, TX. This hope takes many forms. Sometimes it may take the shape of students feeding the homeless. On other occasions it may simply be the BSM providing a free meal to students on campus. It is our belief that we are partners with God here on this amazing planet. So, wherever we see God working to bring justice or meet needs we come alongside, and actively participate.
- **Alexis Foundation**
 - The Alexis Foundation, formerly FHG (For His Glory), is committed to giving the orphans of Haiti a hope and a future through adoption. Until God brings them to their forever home, FHG helps provide the best possible care through its orphanage named Maison. Most of the children living at Maison will join forever families through international adoption. FHG also has a number of children who will be reunited with their birth family once they are stable, strong and healthy.
- **The Whitfield Family**
 - The Whitfields currently serve as missionaries in Kenya through Open Door Kenya. Open Door Kenya is currently involved in an array of ministries. They are able to reach into the prisons, local schools, area churches, continue some community transformation, and more recently begin to work with young single soon-to-be mothers in a project that we have named Waridi House.
- **The Andrus Family**
 - The Andrus' currently serve as missionaries in Kenya where they are sharing the gospel and oversee the Dream Center, a place to empower the community through education—library, parenting classes, addiction support, bible studies, tutoring, etc.

Future Partners

Our desire in the future is to partner with some or all of the following.

- Missionaries
- Church Plants
- Local Food Bank
- Adopt a School/Teacher Initiative
- Human Trafficking Prevention

Multi-Service Model:

At some point in the future we must consider implementing a multi-service model with the sole desire of reaching more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. While this is not currently feasible given our limited amount of space it is something we should start setting our prayers and minds towards. Future building projects that include education space would assist in making this goal a reality.

What could a multi-service model look like at The Grove? An example is below:

- 1st service (8:15am - 9:15am) followed by Sunday School (9:30am - 10:30am) followed by 2nd service (10:45am)

Fellowship & Togetherness:

Maintaining current relationships within the church body and cultivating new ones is what the New Testament church is all about. As we continue to move into the future we want to emphasize the importance of maintaining and/or creating solid christian relationships within our church body. Active participation in ministries, bible studies and church activities will be vital to seeing this accomplished.

Biblical Responses to Worldly Issues

It is absolutely vital for The Grove and the church universal to have a clear and biblical response to worldly issues that are mainstream and affecting the current culture climate. The Grove will seek to provide clear and biblical responses to such issues as:

- Marriage
- Sexuality
- Gender Identity
- Racism
- Value of Life
- Social Media
- and much more

Church Government

The Grove currently operates as an autonomous, congregational led church that is overseen by a group of Servant Leaders and led by our Lead Pastor. This model allows every member in our church to express their voice while submitting to the leadership and vision of our Servant Leaders and Lead Pastor. Above all, Jesus remains our Great Shepherd who guides and directs all we do as a church body.

- **Deacon-Servant Leaders**

Emphasis, training and education will be a top priority when it comes to our Deacon-Servant Leaders. Keeping our hearts aimed at Christ and understanding the biblical role and responsibilities of a deacon will benefit and bless the church.

Discipleship & Education

For any type of spiritual growth and maturity to take place there must be a dedicated effort towards discipleship and education. Along with Sunday School and our various ministries, The Grove will continue to provide resources that meet people right where they are in an effort to help them cultivate a deeper love for the Lord and passion for living in obedience. This would be modeled and lived out from our pastors, staff, leaders, volunteers and all throughout our church body.

Senior Adult Ministries

Creating a ministry dedicated to our senior adult demographic would benefit our church greatly. Our senior adults are a cherished part of our church with a long history of faithfulness and commitment. Remaining intentional about integrating them into our ministries is vital. Potential ministry ideas include having a weekly coffee and bible study time, monthly fellowship gatherings at church or in homes, etc. Other ideas include creating mentorships between senior families and young families. This could create opportunities for young families to glean wisdom from our senior adults. This would follow the model we read about in 1 Timothy and Titus.

Visitor & Member Integration

Every Sunday our church welcomes several visitors and guests. Continuing to provide an appropriate follow-up procedure is paramount. This will create connections with visitors and guests beyond Sunday mornings. Establishing a culture where our church body is able to recognize visitors and approach them will be vital. Challenging our members to reach out to new faces is another way we will reflect and embody the DNA of a New Testament church.

Transitioning from visitor and guest to frequent attender and ultimately a member is the goal. Making it clear to our church body the call and benefits of being a member of a local church will be important. Providing, 3-4 times a year, a member's class that details who we are as a church, our vision, mission, purpose and culture will help us in accomplishing all the Lord has called us to do.

Online Resources & Social Media Presence

The corporate gathering of Christians for the sole purpose of worship and adoration is a biblical prescription for the church. Nothing will ever or should ever replace the physical gathering of God's people on a weekly basis.

However, as Millennials, Generation Z and Generation Alpha slowly (5-20 years) become the majority of church goers it is imperative that The Grove continue to meet these individuals right where they are. Where they are is online. The front door of the church has shifted with the digital age. The digital age brought about the greatest communication shift since the printing press was invented. That was over 500 years ago. More than half of all people who will visit a church have already researched it online. According to the latest research, 70-80% of people are active on social media. The social media platform has quickly become a mission field. That is why The Grove will continue to keep its social media presence relevant and commit to providing online resources to individuals who can access them and be provided with avenues to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Staff & Internships

The Grove will continue to invest in its staff. A healthy church is the result of a healthy staff. Providing avenues of spiritual growth and accountability is what makes our staff one of the best.

The call to ministry is not one that is taken lightly. It is a life-changing, soul stirring journey where God uses his son or daughter to impact lives and spread the gospel to the world. In the future, The Grove will serve as a place for those who are experiencing a call to ministry to have the opportunity to serve and gain valuable experience. Ministry internships will prepare and equip individuals for service in churches, ministry organizations and missions around the world.

All This & Much More

There is so much more that we desire to do and believe the Lord is stirring in the hearts of our people. While this handbook is meant to give us an overview of what our vision is, it is far from comprehensive. **As we seek to accomplish this vision the Lord may stir us to do something different, change things or try another avenue all together.** The point is, we want to remain sensitive and committed to the Lord's guidance and direction as we serve our community and live out this vision and mission.

How Can You Be Involved?

We WANT YOU to be involved! This vision will succeed with YOU! There are a couple of ways you can get involved today.

1. Commit to praying for the Lord to bring this vision to pass. Pray for our staff, servant leaders, ministry volunteers and members.
2. Consider officially joining The Grove in membership. It makes the best sense to commit to a vision when you have committed the organization behind the vision. Get more information about church membership at www.reachthegrove.com/nextsteps
3. Commit to serving in a ministry. The greatest spiritual growth happens when we are actively serving. Get more information about serving at www.reachthegrove.com/nextsteps
4. Commit to attending church consistently. When you surround yourselves with God's people on a regular basis it creates an atmosphere to be encouraged, equipped and uplifted.
5. Sign up to receive weekly news & updates from The Grove. Visit www.reachthegrove.com/newsletter to sign up.

Closing Words

The journey before us has been paved by the grace, mercy, might and love of our savior, Jesus Christ. Often, a journey can seem and feel intimidating, Many of the journeys we read about in scripture were. Yet, **when God's people leaned into the power of the Holy Spirit, focused on the Lord and united together in prayer and fellowship, they were able to experience the fruits of their work. Church, we can do this! Let's do it together!**

To find out more about The Grove be sure to visit us online at www.reachthegrove.com